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'No Faiz, pro-Imran judges around to aid PTI in by-polls'

• Punjab CM Maryam questions 'PTI boycott', claims rival party contested all seats • Credits PML-N's focus on 'performance over narrative' for win • Nawaz lauds Shehbaz, Maryam for victory in by-elections

By Zulqernain Tahir

LAHORE: Lambasting the opposition PTI, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz said that there were no longer any intelligence chiefs or judges, who had helped the party win past elections.

"Without Gen Faiz or [PTI founder] Imran-friendly judges, the PTI's so-called popularity is fully exposed," she said while addressing a meeting of cabinet members and administrative secretaries here on Monday.

"A party goes for a boycott of an election when it is certain that it is going to lose. These by-elections were a referendum, and the people of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have given their verdict in favour of the PML-N."

The Punjab CM criticised the former ISI chief and several ex-judges of the Supreme Court for allegedly aiding PTI founder Imran Khan in winning the 2018 general elections.

Retired Lt Gen Faiz Hameed is currently in military custody and facing court martial for charges including engaging in political activities as well as misusing his authority.

"We were told that political parties win by narratives, not by development. But nothing makes a better narrative than performance, and the by-poll results have proven it," she said, adding that those who relied on narrative alone were easily defeated in the by-elections, referring to the PTI.

'PTI contested all seats'

She maintained that PTI-backed candidates contested all seats in the by-elections using photos of prisoner number 804, a reference to Mr Khan. "Is this not hypocrisy?" she asked. She questioned why the PTI did not boycott the by-polls in KP. "It shows the PTI's trust in the administration, but the people in KP also voted for the PML-N. The people of KP are tired of empty narratives."

CM Maryam claimed that the federal and Punjab governments were functioning under the leadership of her father, the PML-N president.

'Poor political strategy'

Interestingly, the PTI's political committee had decided to "actively contest all by-elections", aiming not to leave the political arena vacant for rivals.

However, Mr Khan vetoed the decision and announced a boycott, citing it was not favourable to field candidates for the seats vacated by disqualifying the PTI lawmakers in May 9 cases.

On his direction, the PTI contested two National Assembly seats, one in Lahore and the other in Haripur, but lost both. "Either we should have boycotted all the by-polls or contested all. Allowing a walkover to a single horse [PML-N] on 11 seats and contesting two was poor political strategy," a PTI Punjab leader told *Dawn*.

Shehbaz and Maryam lauded

In a post on X, PML-N chief Nawaz Sharif congratulated the party's candidates and workers on their victory in the by-elections.

"The tireless efforts and selfless service of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz are steering the country back onto the right path. The people of Pakistan have rejected a politics of violence, chaos, and destruction, and have chosen the path of development, prosperity, and stability," he wrote.

Saudi military chief relays desire to elevate defence ties

Top Iranian official in Islamabad for talks

ISLAMABAD: The chief of the Saudi armed forces on Monday relayed his country's desire to elevate its defence and strategic partnership with Pakistan to new heights.

Saudi Armed Forces Chief of General Staff General Fayyadh Bin Hameed Al Rowaili is currently on a visit to Pakistan and held meetings with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Asim Munir, and other senior officials.

During their meeting, PM Shehbaz reaffirmed his commitment to further strengthening the "historic fraternal relations" between the two countries in all sectors, including economic, defence and security.

COAS Field Marshal Asim Munir and Chief of General Staff of Saudi Armed Forces Gen Fayyadh Bin Hameed Al Rowaili laid a floral wreath at Yadgar-i-Shuhada.—PPI

Meanwhile, the two military leaders also discussed strengthening the "longstanding and strategic" cooperation between the two countries, focusing on defence, security and counterterrorism efforts, ISPR said in a statement.

Field Marshal Munir and General Al Rowaili met at General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi, where "both leaders discussed matters of mutual interest, with a particular focus on strengthening strategic military cooperation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia," the statement said.

Ali Larijani arrives

Meanwhile, Ali Larijani, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, reached here on Monday for talks with senior Pakistani leaders.

Mr Larijani is expected to meet Pakistan's political and military leadership during the visit.

His trip follows Speaker of the Majlis Bagher Ghalibaf's visit to Islamabad last month, marking the second high-level Iranian delegation to Pakistan in weeks.

In a post on *X* before landing in Pakistan, Mr Larijani said: "Iran and Pakistan are two important and influential countries in ensuring lasting security in the region, and we always pay close attention to the brotherly relations between the countries of the region."

Tehran has voiced reservations about Trump's Gaza plan.—Dawn Report

PTI blasts govt for '1971-style power grab'

By Ikram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD: The PTI on Monday lashed out at the incumbent government, alleging that it had resurrected the "1971 blueprint" by "first brazenly disqualifying genuinely elected representatives, then fraudulently imposing rejected losers to fabricate a counterfeit majority, and finally forcibly prolonging its rule".

Reacting to the by-elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa following the disqualification of PTI lawmakers after their conviction in the May 9 violence cases, the party's Central Information Secretary, Sheikh Waqas Akram, criticised the rulers for repeating history's "gravest mistakes" and learning no lessons from the Fall of Dhaka — a tragedy caused by the "brutal denial of the Awami League's mandate, systematic oppression, and the callous, step-motherly 'abuse' of the people of East Pakistan".

He insisted that the country was on the verge of security, economic, political, and social collapse, and urged the government to learn from past mistakes by taking corrective and remedial measures instead of repeating old blunders while expecting different results.

Mr Akram said just like the Awami League, the PTI had secured a landslide victory in the February 8, 2024 general elections, only to be "robbed" of its mandate through a "midnight mega poll heist" and a subsequent spree of disqualifications against PTI candidates under "flimsy excuses and the denial of reserved seats, designed to hand a two-thirds majority to the government, enabling it to push through self-serving, anti-democracy, and highly contentious constitutional amendments".

He expressed surprise at why the current rulers were so intent on replicating the same disastrous model of 1971, raising serious questions about their patriotism and sincerity toward the country.

Mr Akram maintained that such "controlled and rigged" elections could never serve as a true measure of the popularity of the PTI or its founder, Imran Khan — one that was clearly demonstrated when all his past arch-rivals united in a coalition, with the connivance of state institutions, to block his path to power.

Jaffar Express comes under attack at Bolan Pass

By Saleem Shahid

QUETTA: The Peshawar-bound Jaffar Express once again escaped an armed attack in the Bolan Pass area of Kachhi district, Balochistan, on Monday.

It was the sixth attack on the Jaffar Express between Quetta and Sibi during the past one and a half months.

Railway officials said the Jaffar Express departed Quetta for its destination, Peshawar, on schedule, and after crossing Mach station, when it reached near Aab-i-Gum, armed men opened fire on the train from the nearby mountains.

Security personnel, including Railways Police travelling on the train, immediately retaliated and returned fire. However, after a brief exchange, the assailants escaped from the area.

Railway officials said all bogies of the Jaffar Express remained safe in the armed attack. "No casualty was reported in the shooting and all passengers travelling on the train remained safe," a senior railway official said.

He said the train was stopped after the firing incident and later proceeded to its next destination after security clearance. Security on the railway track was tightened following the armed attack on the train.

The Jaffar Express has been facing continuous attacks, including a bomb blast on the railway track between Quetta and Jacobabad.

INAUGURAL SESSION

At the Pakistan Population Summit 2025

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MINISTER FOR PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

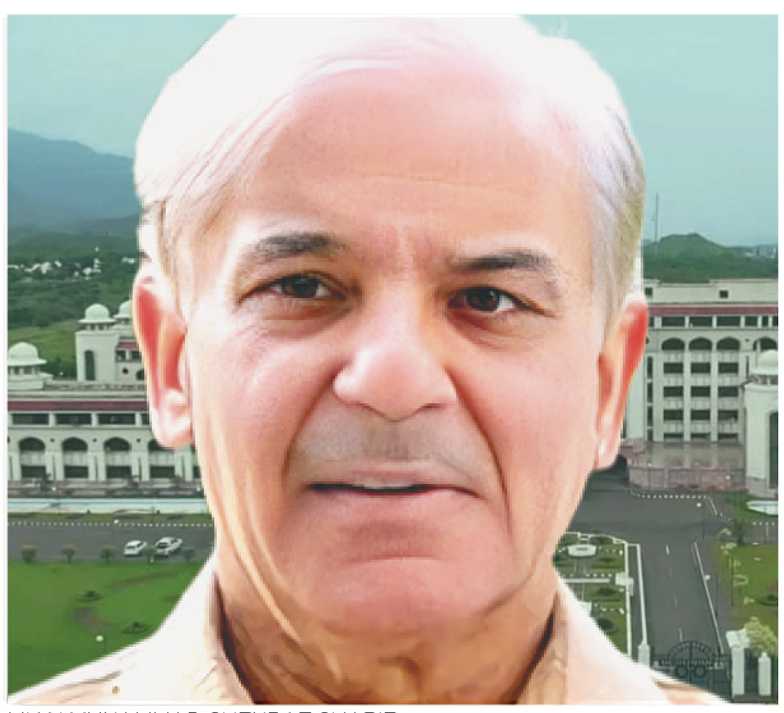
MIAN MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF
PRIME MINISTER OF ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN

PHOTO: SHERRY REHMAN ARCHIVE

SENATOR SHERRY REHMAN
CHAIRPERSON, PARLIAMENTARY FORUM FOR POPULATION

DR. M. MUKHTAR AHMAD BHARATH
MINISTER OF STATE, NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICES

10:00 AM, DEC 1

Session one of The Pakistan Population Summit 2025 brings together the country's top leadership to set the tone for two days of meaningful dialogue on population, development, and national wellbeing. The session begins at 10:00 AM sharp. Session Chair, Professor Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary, Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, will guide the opening discourse, leading into the event's keynote moment: a visionary address by His Excellency, Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Prime Minister of Pakistan, on the urgent need to align population policies with sustainable growth. Senator Sherry Rehman, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Forum for Population, will give another keynote address on the complicated interplay between Pakistan's two most important national crises: climate change and rapid population increase. The session concludes with Closing Remarks by Dr. Malik Mukhtar Ahmad Bharath, Minister of State, National Health Services, Regulation & Coordination, underscoring the national commitment to evidence-based planning and long-term resilience. The audience is expected to be seated half an hour before the Prime Minister's address.

SCAN TO VIEW AGENDA

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